

How a Case is Presented to the Board

Presenters will be requested to obtain and send the following materials:

- a. all medical records pertaining to the incident under investigation and all background medical data possessed on the victim;
- b. all investigative reports, interviews, polygraphic examinations and other reports possessed by law enforcement;
- c. all autopsy reports, death certificate, and any and all scientific reports which have been prepared;
- d. copies of photographs of the crime scene, the victim, autopsy and other relevant photographic material. X-rays and videos may be brought to the meeting; and
- e. a brief narrative summary statement which describes the suspected crimes, investigative steps taken as of the date of the preparation of the statement and a description of the issue(s) or questions you wish the Board to address.

The Board requests that each team of presenters include the prosecuting attorney and the investigating officer. In cases involving the death of a child, the examining pathologist is also invited to attend.

A member of the team will be requested to provide a brief synopsis of the case to the Board at the beginning of the discussion and to indicate to the Board any specific questions the team would like to have answered or the direction it is seeking.

The review is informal and consists of a discussion of the evidence presented and its significance. In order to ensure complete confidentiality of all case materials and discussions, no minutes are taken of the meetings and no written report, opinion or conclusion is issued from the Board. Where appropriate, presenters may find it desirable to request such reports from individual experts.

Q u e s t i o n s ?

For more information about the Attorney General's Medical Legal/Advisory Board on Elder Abuse and Neglect, please contact Suzanne Scheaffer, Executive Secretary to the Board, at (717) 783-4988.

The Pennsylvania Attorney General's Medical/Legal Advisory Board on Elder Abuse and Neglect



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Medical/Legal Advisory Board
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The Pennsylvania Attorney General's Medical/Legal Advisory Board on Elder Abuse and Neglect is a body of approximately 40 experts who meet bimonthly to provide professional consultation to the prosecution and law enforcement communities. Created in 1998 as a resource for Pennsylvania's investigators and prosecutors, the Attorney General's Medical/Legal Advisory Board on Elder Abuse and Neglect has since reviewed cases involving elder abuse and neglect. The Board's membership includes Pennsylvania's premier medical experts specializing in such areas as forensic pathology, geriatric medicine, and radiology. Rounding out the expertise of the Board are district attorneys, investigators, representatives from the Department of Health and the Department of Public Welfare and experts from other related disciplines. Members of the Board, all of whom have distinguished themselves by their commitment to combating elder abuse and neglect, are appointed to serve by Attorney General Jerry Pappert.

The Board functions as a consulting and advisory body in cases of elder abuse (both physical and sexual) and neglect which are under investigation by a protective service agency or law enforcement agency, or which are being prosecuted. The Board's expertise is particularly useful in cases where the evidence appears to be inconclusive or contradictory, or where the significance of medical or scientific evidence is either not known or is unclear. The Board also assists investigators and prosecutors in further defining the goals of an investigation, preparing to prove a case at trial and preparing to

meet defenses which are likely to be raised in the prosecution of a case.

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Examples of Cases Reviewed by the Board

Examples of topics and questions posed to the Board include:

- whether a particular injury can be determined to have occurred within a specific period of time;
- whether an injury is a result of abuse, neglect or could have been accidentally sustained;
- whether an injury could have been sustained in the manner described by the suspect(s);
- whether an injury can be explained by a pre-existing medical condition;
- how an injury might have been caused or sustained;
- what key questions should be asked of suspects and witnesses in the course of an investigation; and
- whether existing evidence is sufficient for prosecution, and if not, how further evidence should be gathered.

How to Request a Case Review by the Board

Cases are presented to the Board upon request of the investigating officer, the prosecutor, the Coroner, a Medical Examiner or protective services caseworker. To request a review by the Board, contact Suzanne Scheaffer, Executive Secretary to the Board, at (717) 783-4988, with a brief description of the case and reasons for requesting the review. In scheduling case reviews, consideration is given to the urgency of a request, the amount of time it will take for the requesting team to obtain and forward all necessary materials in advance of the review and the availability of time.

Materials Required from Presenters to the Board

All materials relevant to each case are compiled and forwarded to Board members at least 10 days prior to the scheduled review. Therefore, once a case is scheduled to be heard by the Board, the following materials must be received from the presenter 30 days in advance of the meeting date so that these materials can be compiled, photocopied, bound and mailed to the members of the Board. It is important that the materials be as complete as possible to ensure that the Board has all available information. Incomplete information may result in an incomplete resolution of issues addressed by the Board.

